

1 MS. ANITA BEDELL

2  
3 CHAIRMAN JAMES: Lynn Barron. She's not here. Anita  
4 Bedell.

5 MS. BEDELL: Thank you. My name is Anita Bedell.  
6 I'm executive director of Illinois Church Action on Alcohol  
7 Problems and Illinois Churches in Action. Those are statewide  
8 alcohol and drug prevention organizations.

9 In 1992 we also added gambling because of the rapid  
10 increase in gambling expansion in the United States, especially  
11 in Illinois and the close connection with alcohol and drug  
12 addiction.

13 As Milton said, if this is a battle and a fight, then  
14 we've been in this fight for six years. Sometimes it gets a  
15 little weary with all the tactics that come against us. When we  
16 first started lobbying in the Illinois legislature, there were  
17 two of us to lobby against 30 to 35 high paid gambling lobbyists.  
18 The tactics are very simple. With just two people sometimes we  
19 would be out of the room so we had to learn to have one person in  
20 the room at all times, even if the meeting was delayed for an  
21 hour or two hours. One of us had to stay in the room because as  
22 soon as we would both leave, they would go ahead and start the  
23 committee and then go ahead and pass the legislation.

24 I knew in January that you were going to come up here  
25 and this was a concern to leave, because this is the last week of  
26 the legislative session in Illinois. I learned this afternoon  
27 that while I'm up here, they have put together a conference  
28 committee report that includes dockside gambling, relocation of  
29 license and a referendum for continuous gambling in Illinois.

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1 Our session ends on Friday, as I told you earlier. This is what  
2 happens in Illinois. Everything is put together behind closed  
3 doors at the final days of the session and the less people that  
4 they have to give public comment or to call legislators, the  
5 better they like it. So this is a very difficult time for me to  
6 be up here but I think it's important that you hear the story  
7 from Illinois.

8 Because of our concern for addictions, we get a lot  
9 of calls from families who have been torn apart by addictions.  
10 There's a story of a woman whose husband committed suicide, left  
11 her with a two and three year old. The mother that had two  
12 children, her husband owned two businesses. She went to the  
13 casinos with her husband's partner, asked if the casino would cut  
14 off the credit, and she said, can't you understand that maybe  
15 this man has a family and has a job. He is here all day and all  
16 night. The casino could see no problem because he did not cause  
17 any trouble. He has since lost a business and they have  
18 divorced.

19 These are some of the problems that we hear on a  
20 daily and weekly basis. So for all of the glamour, there is a  
21 cost. Thank you.

22 CHAIRMAN JAMES: Thank you.

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